

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 1000 OFFLINE

Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Curt Dubost

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Distance Learning Course

Learning College: This is an off-line course. Students may complete coursework by e-mail, by snail mail or by personal delivery. Each student must carefully read the syllabus, the text, and my responses to do assignments correctly and increase their skill level. By the end of the semester, students will have demonstrated what they have learned through writing and grammar assignments. The text is designed to help you understand each part of the course, each writing assignment and test. If the text is not clear to you at any point, please contact me for further advice or clarification. Distance learning can be a challenging format, but it is ideal for students who are motivated to succeed on their own and who are self-reliant in terms of study habits and *truly want to improve their writing skills*. Students have the opportunity in this class to create their own best learning environment.

Course Description: This is a college preparatory course for those students whose placement test scores indicate a need for a review of the mechanics of written composition: sentence structure, punctuation, vocabulary, and spelling. This course includes intensive training in paragraph and essay writing, reading for understanding, and learning the grammatical aspects of the English language. Students must pass this course to graduate from Taft College. For this reason, it represents the writing standards for the college, and students who pass the class must be expected to have achieved a minimum level of competency in writing.

Textbook and Required Materials:

Sentences, Paragraphs, and Beyond 5th edition written by Lee Brandon and Kelly Brandon (available in the TC bookstore). (\$85)

The Old Man and the Sea (Hemingway) (\$12)

Students must have access to a computer with Word for writing assignments sent as attachments to an email. Hard copies of assignments can alternately be given to the staff in the LRC to be filed in my folder there. If you have any questions about your assignments, do not ask the staff in the LRC, call or email the instructor of the course. It is possible but more difficult to send assignments via US postal service. Students may also attend the same course I teach on campus Wednesday and Thursday nights and/or campus office hours for special review. I am available by e-mail daily and return messages promptly.

Suggested Texts and Materials:

- Roget's Thesaurus (available on the Internet) is an enriching source for finding the right word.

- A dictionary (available on the Internet) can be helpful to verify the meanings of words and to check spelling if a spell-checker is not an option or if the spell-checker's ability to nuance the correct word is in doubt.
- A computer disk is useful for storing work done on computers (available in student store).

Grading System:

I will average the points you earn from your assignments and tests by the total points possible to give me a percentage which corresponds to a standard letter grade. If you complete all assignments, do rewrites as suggested, and pass the final exam you should expect to earn a passing grade.

Attendance:

This is based on the student's ability to turn assignments in on time and to keep the instructor informed. The instructor may drop students who do not turn in assignments when they are due. There is a waiting list for the course.

My policy is not to accept late assignments, but I can be flexible with students who communicate a particular situation with me as much in advance as possible. Students must realize that falling behind on even one assignment has a domino effect on the rest of the assignments for the semester. If a student stops turning in assignments, I will not automatically drop them before the deadline; it is the student's responsibility to drop the course should that be necessary. I consider your assignment as on time until midnight of the due date and will not accept assignments more than one week late for any reason. Distance Learning requires a lot of discipline because there are no reminders from the instructor like a student would receive in a face-to-face class. If you ever have a concern, please contact me at cdubost@taft.org.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Since this is not a traditional lecture course, we must rely heavily on the textbook/workbook. We won't be going through it from start to finish; rather we will work from the beginning to the middle and at the same time the middle to the end. This will make sense as the first part of the book deals with the building blocks of writing and the last chapters with more actual writing, but we can't wait all semester to get started with more actually writing. Learning to write is like practicing anything; you learn by doing it, not by learning about doing it. You will also read a short novel (novella) , The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway so you may learn how to write about literature. There will be two midterms and a final exam. Only the better of your two midterm grades counts. You will also write a final essay which will show how much you've

learned about writing in the semester. Any assignment may be rewritten for full credit. The emphasis will be on correct mechanics, the utilization of a variety of sentence structures, learning to edit your own writing (proofreading) and in general writing at a college level. We will be writing descriptive, narrative, persuasive (argument), expository, compare/contrast and literary criticism paragraphs and essays.

Week 1 (due on August 28 - I will allow a grace period of three days since this is your first assignment) Do the practice exam I am sending you and turn in to me ASAP so I can see where you need work. It does not count, but it helps me to help you.

Read the student overview (pages 1-6); read Chapter 1, working each exercise for your own benefit. When I was in college I wasted a lot of time skimming my assigned and underlining or high-lighting portions to review, thinking I was studying. In order for this to do you any good you really have to read it, understand it, and underline with a purpose to encode the information in your memory and to call it to your attention when you review.

Write a two-part response to “Everyone Pays the Price” by Hadley McGraw composed of a **summary and a reaction (label each part separately for this assignment) and turn that in.**

The Teacher’s Perspective: writing a summary is the beginning of analysis because it demands that you adopt an objective viewpoint in interpreting what the author said. It has none of your own opinion, if done correctly. The reaction demands that you make connections between the themes of the text and your own life experience. This is another level of analysis, one that students use more and more as their college education develops. The culmination of this process for most students is the research paper, which demands a continual synthesis of summary and analysis. You do not write a formal research paper in this class, (only a simpler extended essay), but hopefully it prepares you for that writing process with the two-part response assignments and the more complete Expository, Descriptive, Narrative and Persuasive Essays that follow.

Review Writer’s Guidelines for Chapter 1 for your own benefit.

Week 2 (due on September 4)

1. In **Chapter One, Exercise 2**, there are five main ideas you can annotate from “Buddha Taught Nonviolence.” Make a list of these five annotations and turn them in. Subsequently, do the Microtheme Topic in Chapter 2 for your own benefit. Read and study the chapter, doing the exercises and checking your answers online where possible. **Turn in Review 1. Make sure you number your answers. There are two answers for each of the twenty questions.** Revise your micro theme for your own benefit.

2. Read Chapter 14. **Turn in Exercises 1, 2, and 3.** Be creative and just do the best you can to convey your clustering for Exercise 3. Read Chapter 15. **Turn in Exercise 5—a topic sentence**

and outline for the topic you chose in Exercise 1 of Chapter 14.
Review Writer's Guidelines for Chapters 14 and 15.

Week 3 (due September 11)

1. Do the micro theme Topic in Chapter 3 for your own benefit. Read and study Chapter 3, doing the exercises and checking your answers. **Turn in Review 3 of Chapter 3.**

Revise your micro theme for your own benefit.

2. Read and work through Chapter 16. **Turn in exercise 4**, a paragraph, providing both the rough draft and your final draft. Make sure they are correctly labeled. This exercise should be one fully developed paragraph. It is the culmination of the writing process you have been studying so far in the class, so it should be your best work.

Week 4 (due September 18)

Do the micro theme in Chapter 4 for your own benefit. Read and study the chapter and do the practice exercises, so that you will receive a good score on Review 3. **Turn in Review 3 from Chapter 4.**

Week 5 (due September 25)

1. Read Chapter 17 and 18. Reread "My First Real Fire" by Tyson Burns and write a **narrative/descriptive essay** of your own based on reading-related topic number 11 from page 331 and turn it in. Pay close attention to the example essays provided and especially the Writer's Guidelines on page 333-334. Alternately, if a student has no work experience, he or she can write their essay on topic 8, based on John Updike's "A & P." This should be **two full pages**.

2. Read and work through **Chapter 5** in preparation for turning in the combining sentences paragraph from **Review 3**.

Week 6 (due October 2)

1. Read and study Chapter 6 closely. It is one of the most crucial chapters for writers at the college level. These sentence boundary errors are both the most common and the most costly to students' grades in college writing. This chapter can be the difference between passing and failing classes for many students. Do the micro theme for your own benefit, if you have found it educational so far. Do the exercises. **Turn in Review 1 of Chapter 6.** Also, take advantage of the Online Teaching Center. *Go online to college.hmco.com/students and click on Select Your Course Area, then English, then Composition, then e-Exercises, then Sentences and Sentence Problems, and then do the practice tests on run-ons, comma splices, and fragments there. You will get immediate feedback on how well you are doing.*

2. Read Chapter 19 and then take a close look at "When Cupid Aims at the Workplace." What has been your experience of human sexuality and how it functions or it curtailed in the workplace and/or school setting? Though this essay is an exemplification essay and I do want your best examples in vivid detail, some of the most specific examples are often discovered when a writer tells a story (narrative) or describes an object (descriptive), so this essay will likely

combine more than one rhetorical approach to the writing, as most great writing does! **Turn in a two-page essay on your experiences of human sexuality in the workplace or public places.**

Week 7 (due October 9)

1. Read and work through Chapter 10 on balancing sentence parts. Once you understand the concept of parallel construction, you can turn in **Review 2 of Chapter 10.**

2. Read and study Chapter 11. The exercises in this chapter will prepare you for Review 2. Check your mastery of each area before attempting the Review. Do pay attention to the topic in parentheses when you do the following Review. **Turn in Review 3 of Chapter 11.**

First Midterm due...not proctored...on your honor.

Week 8 (due October 16) Read and study Chapter 7. Contact me with any questions or problems. Complete Reviews 2 and 3 and turn in to me.

1. In keeping with our theme of human sexuality in the workplace, read Chapter 21 and focus on the essay “Study Says Flirtatious Women Get Fewer Raises” and write an essay of two pages on one or more of the topics on page 395 (topics 6-10). State what topic(s) you will cover as a heading to the essay and do draw upon your own experience if you can. Study and interpret the causes and effects. **Turn in**

Flirtatious Women in Workplace essay (though you may very well be writing about flirtatious men!).

Week 9 (due October 23). Read and study Chapter 8. Do the exercises. Contact me with any questions. Complete reviews 1,2 and 3 and turn in. Read Chapter 23. Reread John Gray’s “Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus” and write a two-paragraph reaction that makes a connection between his ideas and your life experience. Your connection can show either where his ideas fit with your experience or where his ideas do not fit with your experience. Use specific examples to convey this connection to the text. One to two pages should suffice.

Week 10 (due October 30)

Read and study Chapter 9. Do all exercises. Contact me with any questions or concerns. Complete Review 2 and turn in. Read and study **Chapter 24.** Turn in your solution to **Exercise 2,** Finding Patterns in Photos from page 442. Write an essay describing what you think the restrictions, if any, should be on the use of cell phones while driving, at work, in school, in restaurants, and similar situations.

Midterm #2 due. These are basically practice exams for the Final Exam. Only the better of your two grades counts on the midterms and they are not proctored.

Week 11 (due November 6)

Read and study Chapter 24 on argumentative/persuasive essays. Consider the components of argument and be wary of logical fallacies. Turn in a draft of a two to three page **persuasive essay** based on a topic **you choose from pages 457-460. I will also provide you with a**

supplemental list of possible topics. This will be the subject of your final essay due in final form at the end of the semester. I will review your draft and return it to you to rewrite and complete by December 11. As always, make sure your work is your own original creation. Plagiarized assignments get zero points.

Week 12 (due November 13) read The Old Man and the Sea. Decide if you think it is a simple fishing story, a religious allegory, or a secular humanist epic. Details to follow...don't panic, you can do it. Defend your answer with specifics.

Week 13 (due November 20) Write an expository essay. Pick something, anything, you do really well and/or know a lot about doing. Explain in detail how to do it. Make a tamale. Tune a guitar. Fix a transmission. Kick a field goal. Write an essay. Pick the one thing at which you are most expert and teach me how to do it in writing.

Week 14 (due November 27) Write a descriptive essay. Describe in detail your favorite place in the entire world. Be specific. Use figurative language. Make me feel I'm there and I know why you love it so much. It could be some place exotic or your own room.

Week 15 (due December 4) Write a narrative essay. Tell me the story of something extraordinary that has happened to you. The most exciting time...the scariest, the time you were most proud. This could be in sports, at work, when you did something heroic, when your child was born...

For all essays, you must write a minimum of five paragraphs. Use what you have learned including correct mechanics, punctuation and usage and a variety of sentence structures including simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentences. All of this will make sense after you've done the workbook, and if you don't understand it, contact me.

Week 16 (due December 11) Turn in your final persuasive essay on the controversial issue you chose and wrote your rough draft. This is really important; do your best. Show me what you've learned.

Week 17 (due December 18) Final Exam..not proctored...on your honor to do your own work.

Practical Information

All essays should be double-spaced, size 12 font, with Ariel or Times New Roman type. Most students attach their assignments to an email message and send them to me with English 1000 or the assignment name in the subject line so I don't think it is SPAM. Students with difficulty attaching documents, copy their assignment into the email text

box and send that to me. This causes some assignments to lose formatting. If you have Windows Vista, that is okay for my college computer, but when I work at home, I can't read it, so you may want to consider also pasting your work to ensure more efficient grading. Students who have difficulty with email use the postal service (snail mail) to send their work, but it is rare and not an efficient way to take a course. TCI students use the instructional aide courier system that places work in my folder in the library. Make sure I know which topic you chose for your essays and remember to put your name on the work, as well as the email message, so there will be no mistakes in recording grades. **Plagiarism (using the work or ideas of others without properly giving them credit in your text) results in zero points. A repeat offense will be reported to the Dean of Instruction.** Lastly, try not to get discouraged. You will learn to be a better writer and you will pass if you work hard in this class.

Many of you may not have had success with English in the past. Many of you may be dreading this class. Give it a chance. Writing can really be fun. My student reviews from previous classes have been very positive and if you'll try, you'll both enjoy the class and learn a lot.

Dr. Dubost

